

Hillandale

News

No 212 October 1996

South London Phonograph & Gramophone Society.

J. J. WITHAM, Chairman.

C. A. BOND, Secretary & Treasurer,
129, High Street, Tooting, S.W.

A GRAND "GENUINE"

EDISON PHONOGRAPH CONCERT

Demonstrating Mr. Edison's latest acoustical achievement—the "Blue" Amberol Record and Real Diamond Point Reproducer, also Home Recording Outfit, will be given on ❧ ❧ ❧

SATURDAY, MAY 24TH. 1913. AT 7 P.M.
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COMPLIMENTARY TICKET.

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A G&T. Oak Gramophone pedestal sold recently at auction for £2500.

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Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Limited, Co. Reg. No. 3124250

Founded in 1919

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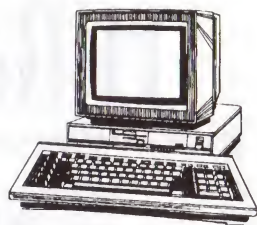
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Front cover illustration: Complimentary Ticket to an Edison Concert given by the
South London Phonograph & Gramophone Society on 24th May 1913.
(Illustration by courtesy of George Frow)

EDITOR'S DESK



Changes

Some eagle-eyed readers will have noticed a change to our title page. The Society has now become a fully-fledged charity, registered with the Charity Commissioners. The registered number is 1057538. This completes the changes in the structure of the Society begun a couple of years ago. The first Annual General Meeting of the re-structured Society will take place on November 19th 1996. A notice of this meeting is enclosed with this issue. The Society is now able to meet the challenges of moving from the twentieth century into the twenty-first century with confidence.

Cordex Binders

I mentioned in the Editor's Desk of *Hillandale News* No.210, June 1996 that George Woolford had negotiated with our suppliers to provide an enlarged binder to accommodate 12 issues of the 40-page *Hillandale News* plus index. These binders are now in stock and can be ordered from the Booklist at **£6 each plus postage**.

October Meeting

This meeting gives us a chance, once again, to hear cylinders played on contemporary machines. George Glasstris will play some of his favourite cylinders on machines from the collection of Dominic Combe. All are welcome to share in this pleasurable occasion.

November Meeting

Peter Copeland, of the British Library, National Sound Archive, will give the first of two talks entitled *The Engineer and the Artist*. Peter is responsible for preserving the National Sound Archive's large collection of recordings and has a wide knowledge of the work of the recording engineers in the days of 78s. If you've not heard Peter before do come along as you'll be in for a most instructive evening.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **December 1996** issue will be **15th October 1996**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

EDISON PHONOGRAPH PRODUCTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM 1912-1921

by George Frow

Part 1 - Introduction

While researching an article on the growth of the Phonograph and Gramophone Societies in Great Britain in the years leading to the outbreak of the Great War of 1914-1918 (W.W. 1) it seemed an opportunity to go through the reports of meetings of these early societies published in the two principal talking machine journals of the day and re-discover two lost pages from the Phonograph history book; firstly the reaction of British enthusiasts to the new Edison Blue Amberol Cylinders in 1912 and after, and secondly exactly when the Edison Diamond Discs were first heard here and the first Edison Disc Phonographs seen and heard, and what the Edison-ites of the day thought of them. Some Edison-ites of course chose not to join a society or lived too far away from one, and it is not possible to take account of their opinions except when one of them would write to the talking machine press.

On paper this must look straightforward, but in fact Blue Amberol cylinders and the diamond reproducers for them were slow to come over, and after the Edison fire of December 1914 Blue Amberols were no longer recorded directly.* The sound degenerated, bewildering British enthusiasts who were forming Edison Phonograph Societies in support of the man who for many could do no wrong. After this date Edison goods in Britain became scarce owing to the war.

Technical problems with the Edison Diamond Discs and the machines to play them made for delays in development at West Orange and the Company was reluctant to release any for export, and by the time these were approved a curtain of prohibition fell in March 1916 on British importation of talking machines and records because of the destruction of shipping by U-boats in the Atlantic. Until the embargo high freight and insurance charges had also been a deterrent. Edison Disc machines and records proved costly against the home produced Gramophones and records in Great Britain.

The response of the trade and customers in the United Kingdom to the new Edison products exists in reports of meetings in the British Phonograph and Gramophone press, the monthly or twice-monthly journals *Talking Machine News (and Journal of Amusements)* and *The Sound Wave* whenever the secretaries submitted them; the best-run societies were the most regular in publicising their gatherings but when the magazines were short of space, reports were cut or left out.

A disappointing feature in an interesting period of instrument development is that it has not been possible to match up these reactions in the British societies to parallel attitudes abroad. If such musical societies existed in the United States, no reports have been seen although many stores there set up phonograph salons for the demonstration of instruments, but commercialisation seemed to override social intercourse, and no indications of any clubs there have been seen.

The ground seemed more fertile in Australia from where several correspondents to the British journals asked about societies here with a view to starting similar at home. Australians too, on leave from the trenches are described as visiting meetings in 'Blighty'.

In some of the early societies there was a caucus of widely-known sound engineers and dealers who were impatient to hear both Mr Edison's celluloid Blue Amberols and his Diamond Discs, and reports of their comments and experiments with various ways of playing them are revealing of the day, and the men were free and sometimes disputatious in their impressions of the new records, and discussions at the ends of meetings sometimes continued late and closed on a contentious note. It was many years before these societies settled down to playing records and enjoying the music. Contests and competitions involving both members' and outside machines and records and accessories dominated most of the meetings. Fortunately things have changed for the intervening 80 years, but the occasional live music excerpt from talented members, or recordings of such are heard no more.

* Works reports on selected Blue Amberols exist from mid-1914 as to using the performers and pieces of music on the new Discs, but most were vetoed by Edison as not good enough. Despite this, direct recordings were made of these popular performances and feature among the earliest Edison Discs issued. It would be at this time that the decision was made to transfer the sound from the Discs to Cylinders for future issues, saving on artists' fees and studio space but details have not been seen.

Part 2 - The Blue Gift Horse

The Blue Amberols were officially launched in the United States in October 1912 and the earliest reported sighting was by members of the West London Society on a visit to the London Edison factory in the same month. Whether they heard them played is not stated.

Blue Amberol samples for dealers came over in time for Christmas but several of the North London Society had joined with some West London Society members and ordered six from 'a firm in Massachusetts', playing them on an Edison Standard Phonograph with Cygnet horn and sapphire Model O reproducer at a special meeting convened on December 21st 1912. The titles are not revealed but the meeting found the records "tone clear and smooth, albeit not as fine as the obsolete wax types". Members looked forward to a performance with the new Diamond B reproducer. The same cylinders were heard at the North London Society's meeting on January 9th 1913 without reported comment.

Three named Blue Amberols were played at the meeting of the South London Phonograph and Gramophone Society two days later. These were samples that had been sent to the Secretary C. A. Bond, at whose Tooting music shop the Society met. The records were:

28104	<i>One Sweetly Solemn Thought</i>	Thomas Chalmers
1552	<i>Are You Going to Dance?</i>	Elizabeth Spencer, Irving Gilette
1502	<i>Trio from Faust</i>	Kimball, Miller, Croxton

Alongside the wax Amberols these were said to be "superior in clarity, tone and volume, surface noise being conspicuous by its absence".

Outside London the Society at Sheffield played 12 new Blue Amberols in January 1913 and the Tyneside Society on February 12th, but models O and R sapphire reproducers were still used.

The Model B Edison Fireside Phonograph arrived officially in the United Kingdom in February 1913, and on the 8th a member brought his new machine to the North London

Society meeting. It was fitted with the Diamond Model B reproducer and this was passed round for inspection. On playing, the general opinion was that there was more scratch and that this needed the Edison Company's attention. While the Model B's articulation was good when compared to the wax records' reproducers, the sound was said to fall short in tonal quality, breadth and detail and consequently beauty and impressiveness. This critical report has the mark of the pro-Edison (and opinionated) sound engineer Adrian Sykes, who was acting secretary of the North London Society. This meeting was the first public hearing of the new Model B reproducer in Great Britain, and although other societies started using it at Blue Amberol evenings in the next few months, mixed opinions were heard and some users found difficulty in putting aside their sapphire Models O and R; these gave Blue Amberols a more subdued tone. Probably ears were not yet attuned to the new bright sound. One expert described the celluloid Blue Amberols as being made of Vilolite, a long-forgotten early plastic material.

At a North London Society meeting on April 12th 1913 Adrian Sykes said that the Amberol should be issued in parallel, wax and blue, and "unless the (Edison) Company changed its policies the (78) disc records would triumph finally". From his south London shop C. A. Bond said that in his experience the unwearing qualities of the Blue Amberols appealed greatly to the public and reported the Model B reproducer was selling well. In the long term both of Syke's points were correct; the Blue Amberols had a bright path for the moment, more often than not coming in the first three places in competitions beloved of the societies when played against the better 78 records of the big companies, but their limited repertory and availability would tell against them.

The first time a wooden Cygnet horn and Diamond Model B reproducer were used in this country in public was by the South London Society on February 15th 1913. Although bumping was noticed Blue Amberols were deemed an all-round improvement.

Confidence in the Blue Amberols so hardened among two London societies that each arranged a public concert of these records, described as " 'Genuine' Edison Nights a demonstration of Mr Edison's latest acoustical achievement - the 'Blue' Amberol record and Real Diamond Point Reproducer".

The first by The West London Phonograph and Gramophone Society was held at Bellomo's Restaurant, Chiswick on April 24th with W. Denville Simons - Edison's London sales Manager - in the Chair, and featuring 24 Blue Amberols plus the National Anthem and an Interval. The presence of Paul Cromelin, the company's London Managing Director excited the audience "for a few words" anent the Disc Phonograph, long awaited by the British trade. He said that the machines and discs had been introduced to the American market some months back, and very shortly would be introduced to the home trade. The Society would be favoured with a demonstration at the earliest possible moment.

A month later and evening at the Bell Hotel, Tooting was put on by The South London Phonograph and Gramophone Society. Again there were 24 Blue Amberols, most of a different repertory. At both evenings a mahogany Edison Concert Phonograph with a Diamond Model A reproducer was used, and at the end of the programme several of the audience part in home recording. There was Edison Company support for the presentation and in the printing of programmes and posters.

Not all the Blue Amberols were free of faults and there were complaints to the Company from Edison-ites who had bought them; some were light blue and surface wear showed through after three or four playings. 80 years on collectors still recognise and avoid them.

PART I.

1	BAND	..	..	"POET & PEASANT OVERTURE" (Regular Blue Amberol—23001)	National Military Band
2	SOPRANO SOLO	..	..	"SAY NOT LOVE IS A DREAM" (Regular Blue Amberol—1610)	Elizabeth Spencer
3	TENOR SOLO	..	..	"I HEAR YOU CALLING ME" (Concert Blue Amberol—28110)	Oswell Harrell
4	XYLOPHONE SOLO	..	..	"THE MOCKING BIRD"—FANTASIA (Regular Blue Amberol—1514)	Charles Dush
5	SOPRANO SOLO	..	..	"POLONAISE"—MIGNON (Grand Opera Blue Amberol—28125)	Blanche Arrol
6	BASS SOLO	..	..	"THORA" (Regular Blue Amberol—23002)	Peter Dawson
7	BAND	..	..	"OVER THE WAVES"—WALTZ (Regular Blue Amberol—1506)	New York Military Band
8	SOPRANO & TENOR DUET	..	..	"ARE YOU GOING TO DANCE" "Count of Luxembourg" (Regular Blue Amberol—1552)	Elizabeth Spencer & Irving Gilllette
9	VIOLIN SOLO	..	..	"MEDITATION"—"THAIS" (Concert Blue Amberol—28102)	Albert Spindling
10	RAOTIME DUET	..	..	"HITCHY KOO" (Regular Blue Amberol—1605)	Collins & Harlan
11	SCRIPTURE LESSON WITH HYMN AND ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT— "ST. MARK, 4, 35 to 41" and "PEACE BE STILL!"	..	..	Rev. W. H. Morgan, D.D., and Edison Mixed Quartette (Regular Blue Amberol—1642)	Alexander Prince
12	CONCERTINA SOLO	..	..	"MEDLEY OF IRISH AIRS" (Regular Blue Amberol—23029)	

INTERVAL

WEST LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.



Thomas A. Edison

Chairman :
Mr. A. LAWRIE CRAIG.
Vice-Chairman :
Mr. S. L. BOURCHIER.

Hon. Secretary :
Mr. W. J. WALLACE HAMIL,
5, Wharfedale Road,
Chiswick, W.

PROGRAMME

"Genuine" Edison Night

A Demonstration of Mr. Edison's latest Acoustical achievement—the "Blue" Amberol Record and Real Diamond Point Reproducer.

Chairman . . . Mr. W. DENVILLE SIMONS.

April 24th, 1913, at 7.30 p.m.
At Bellomo's Restaurant, Chiswick, W.

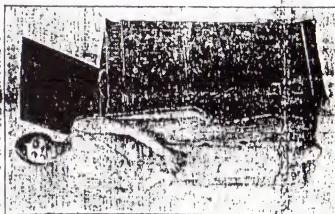
NOTE.—The Instrument being used is the Edison "Concert" Phonograph, in Mahogany . . . Price £18 . 18 . 0

PART II.

13	PIANOFOORTE SOLO	"NEARER MY GOD TO THEE" (Regular Blue Amberol—1647)	<i>Fredmund Hummelbeck</i>
14	BELLA SOLO	From the "MAGIC FLUTE" (Regular Blue Amberol—1553)	<i>Charles Durb</i>
15	CONTRALTO SOLO	"OLD FOLKS AT HOME" (Concert Blue Amberol—28143)	<i>Margaret Egan</i>
16	MIXED QUARTETTE	QUARTETTE FROM "RIGOLETTO" Sing in English. (Regular Blue Amberol—1528)	<i>Frank Craxton Quartette</i>
17	COMIC SONG	"BREAKFAST IN BED" (Regular Blue Amberol—23017)	<i>Harry Lauder</i>
18	BASSO SOLO	(a) "DARKIES' DREAM" (b) "DARKIES' AWAKENING" (Regular Blue Amberol—1544)	<i>Fred Van Epps</i>
19	BASS SOLO	"THE VOLUNTEER ORGANIST" (Regular Blue Amberol—23026)	<i>Peter Duncan</i>
20	BAND	"MEDLEY OF WAR SONGS" (Regular Blue Amberol—1574)	<i>New York Military Band</i>
21	SOPRANO SOLO	"THE ROSARY" <i>Miss Elizabeth Spencer & Knickerbocker Quartette</i> (Regular Blue Amberol—1525)	
22	VIOLIN SOLO	"NOCTURNE E FLAT, OP. 9, NO. 2" (Concert Blue Amberol—28142)	<i>Kathleen Parlove</i>
23	SOPRANO SOLO WITH VIOLIN ORCHESTRA—	"AYE MARIA" (Concert Blue Amberol—28106)	<i>Marie Rappold & Allert Spindling</i>
24	MALE QUARTETTE	"GOODNIGHT, FAREWELL" (Regular Blue Amberol—1596)	<i>Knickerbocker Quartette</i>

GOD SAVE THE KING.

THE NEW Diamond Disc Phonograph



Comparison with
the Living Artist
Reveals
No Difference.

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Daily Demonstrations are held in our special Edison Saloon. Pay in a visit, you will be under no obligation to purchase.

THE NEW EDISON DIAMOND DISC PHONOGRAPH.

THE INSTRUMENT used in the test this evening is not a special model. Any official laboratory model in our Stock will absolutely meet the same test—it is guaranteed to do so.

Made in
Seventeen
different
Period Models.
Prices range
from

£35
to
£2,200.

Simple to
operate.



The
Mechanism
represents
the Acme of
Workmanship
and Quality.

With a
small Adapter
Edison
Instruments
play all makes
of Records.

REPRODUCERS are fitted with genuine Diamond Points, which never wear out and never require changing.

NO NEEDLES TO CHANGE.

THE EDISON RE-CREATION DISCS used are practically unwearable and unbreakable. Edison's 10-inch Discs play twice the length of the ordinary record.

A FULL, COMPREHENSIVE CATALOGUE of Re-Creations include Grand Opera, Ballads, Band and Orchestral Selections, Instrumental Solos and Quaintities, Light and Comic Operas, etc., etc., Dance items by the leading American Orchestras. The following are a few of the world famous Artists who have specially recorded for the Edition:—Freida Hempel, Sergi Rachmaninoff, Maggie Teyte (British National Opera Co.) Giovanni Zenatello, Guido Ciccolini, Stella Power, Lauri Kennedy, Albert Spalding, etc., etc.

May we have the pleasure of furnishing you with further particulars.

HOME DEMONSTRATIONS ARRANGED.

Daily Demonstrations are held in our specially appointed Edison Salon.

Pay us a Visit, you will be under no obligation to purchase.

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First Appearance in Europe.

St. George's Hall, Liverpool,

May Second, Nineteen-twenty-three,

At Eight o'clock.

By arrangement with

Jake Graham, 74 Renshaw Street, Liverpool.

Another of the leading talking-machine characters was Henry Seymour, manufacturer and inventor of various sound-boxes, and he developed his own machine for playing Blue Amberols, using a Graphophone with a friction sound magnifier and adapting it for a Home motor to play the mandrel and an electric motor for the sound magnifier. This played so loudly on occasion that those in the front seats were compelled to move back. Seymour also demonstrated Blue Amberols with a tone-arm of his own making and a Flaxite horn, at first using a Diamond Model B, then one of his own sound-boxes. A Home phonograph with a wooden tone-arm, horn and Model B was also used, and he placed the tone-arm attachment for cylinder phonographs on the market.

Edison concerts with Blue Amberols would become features of many of the societies who put Phonograph and Gramophone (or the reverse) on their titles, and Edison societies were formed at Manchester and Birmingham, and in 1919 in London. Invitations were sent out to the Inventor to become a patron of some of these and he usually acceded after reference to the London office.

West London Phonograph and Gramophone Society	Appointed Patron 1913
Northants Talking Machine Society	Appointed Patron 1914
Manchester Edison Society	Appointed Patron 1916
North London Phonograph and Gramophone Society	Secretary John Barnes wrote an ill-worded letter and Edison ignored it.
City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society	Appointed Patron 1919

At a 'Surprise Night' at the South London Society in June 1915 a 6 guinea Amberola 30, said to be the first in the country was played by the dealer C. A. Bond, who in the same programme unpacked and played an Edison Disc Phonograph Model 80, also said to be the first in the United Kingdom. Comparison was made between similar items on Blue Amberol and Edison Disc, and the cylinder won 16 out of 17 times.

However things were starting to happen to the Blue Amberol cylinders. To cut costs and economise on studio space the Edison Company had been experimenting during 1914 with copying Diamond Discs on cylinder recording waxes through a horn-horn-to-horn process, and following the fire at West Orange in December of that year few directly-recorded Blue Amberols were released. Because of this fire and deteriorating war conditions on the Atlantic, only the January 1915 issue of Blue Amberols arrived in the United Kingdom, February and March none at all, and only part quantities until July 1915 when the Manchester Edison Society held a special meeting to play those records that had arrived and disappointment was expressed at the inferior quality. This seems to be the first published reference to any dubbed Blue Amberols. As if to disbelieve their ears the Society met three weeks later to rehear the cylinders on an Amberola 1, but no improvement was noticed, nor with subsequent issues until import stopped by early 1916.

The Manchester Edison Society had fostered a special relationship with Edison and his West Orange and London staff, and in April 1915 the Chairman, H. C. Goldman sent a cylinder recording to the Inventor explaining the objects of the Society and ending with a hearty cheer from the assembled members. This record failed to reach him and the following replacement was sent towards the end of 1915:

The Manchester Edison Society,
11 The Avenue,
Lower Broughton,
Manchester

To Mr Thomas Alva Edison -
Greeting

November 1st 1915

The members of The Manchester Edison Society, now gathered together in monthly assembly, desire in the first place to record their deep appreciation of the many valuable services you have rendered in the cause of innocent pleasure and entertainment by the invention and perfection of the Phonograph, and above all, by the most recent introduction of the Blue Amberol record.

At the time of the formation of this society some months ago, the first of its kind we believe solely devoted to the Edison Cylinder cause, we had the pleasure of sending you a home-made record asking you to become our patron, but we heard the record unfortunately never reached you. We now beg once more to make our request and trust that you will favour us with your kind permission to use your honoured name in the above connection. By doing so you will not only give us great pleasure, but will also add, we hope to our future usefulness. Unfortunately in these days of strife and bloodshed when this terrible war is making its effect felt throughout the whole world it is only by making great sacrifices that our efforts to ameliorate the lot of our wounded heroes by the innocent pleasures of the phonograph can be indulged in, and we trust the Edison Company will use their efforts to help us in our difficulties on this side of the Atlantic both to maintain our interest and affection in the cult of the Blue Cylinder, to which we have made many converts, and to help us to overcome the obstacles raised against us by the new import duties in this country.

We have the honour, Dear Sir, to subscribe ourselves to your devoted adherents.
(9 Officers then read out their names)

Edison replied "it will not be long before the members will be able to get some very fine music as I have been improving the methods of recordings". He became Patron of The Manchester Edison Society in 1916.

The poor recorded quality of the Blue Amberols had become apparent by the middle of 1915, and having sent the cylinder message, a tactful letter was sent to the Inventor by the Manchester Society on November 7th 1915 saying that the Society intended to send him a list of was Amberols the members would like in blue form. Some of these - Sousa's Band, Victor Herbert's Orchestra, Harry Lauder - appeared later, but whether in response to the letter is unclear.

For the remainder of the war the societies in their cylinder programmes leaned towards directly-recorded Blues in preference to those dubbings that had arrived and surprisingly these early records continued to win contests and competitions against HMV, Columbia and many other makes.

In April 1919, a few months after the war's end, Adrian Sykes of the North London Society at some trouble and expense obtained a few of the new Royal Purple cylinders and recently-made Blue Amberols, and they were played on one member's Amberola 1 and another's Edison Home. The new records, as listed here were followed by nine direct recordings (not listed).

(Royal Purple)

29015	Trovatore - <i>Mira, di Acerbe Lagrime</i>	Rappold and Parvis
29013	<i>Theme and Variations</i> (Proch)	Frieda Hempel
29010	Mignon - <i>Elle ne Croyait plus</i>	P. A. Asselin
29007	<i>Aloha Ce!</i>	Frieda Hempel
29009	<i>Ridonami la Calma</i> (Tosti)	Taurino Parvis
29017	<i>The Americans Come</i>	Arthur Middleton

(Blue Amberols)

3536/7	<i>Dance of the Hours</i>	American Symphony Orchestra
3448	<i>I'll Take you Home again, Kathleen</i>	American Instrumental Quartet
3405	<i>Ballet Egyptien No.3</i>	American Symphony Orchestra

Approval of these first samples of Royal Purples was subject to some qualifications: "the all-round excellence of many of the 'old Blue Amberols' has set up a standard which has evidently taxed the talents of producers to maintain". Four of the above records appeared in Manchester on June 2nd and at the Belfast Society in the same month.

Suspicion that the new Blue Amberols were copies of the Edison Discs (now called Re-Creations) gradually hardened among the Edison-ites, but not all agreed as there were so few Blue Amberols and Discs of similar titles for making comparisons.

J. W. Crawley made this assertion at a North London Society meeting on August 9th 1919, leading to a 'considerable discussion' and a 'breeze' when Henry Seymour gave reason for dissenting. Crawley pressed the charge and supported comparative testing, the evening ending in discord with Seymour demanding proof. Crawley then referred to Duplicated Amberols as Damberols and the name has stuck for British Edison-ites. Seymour must have reflected long because, according to Crawley later in the year "Seymour won't have Damberols at any price".

The only reported comparison between Cylinder and Disc was made by The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society in September 1919 using:

Edison Disc 50202	<i>Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers</i>
Blue Amberol 2530	sung by Billy Murray

when they were declared to be identical.

Jake Graham was the first dealer after the war to receive a consignment of Blue Amberols when five to six thousand arrived at Liverpool Docks on October 11th 1919. half the consignment were found to be in the dubbed numbers, and half the earlier direct recordings. Dissatisfaction with the dubbed issues led Edison-ites to explore the Edison foreign lists, and many found titles new to them and some were blue versions of the earlier wax Amberols.

In a letter to *Talking Machine News* for October 1919 J. Penrose Lambe of Hampstead, a cylinder supporter expressed the feelings of many owners by asking for indestructible cylinders to be made again in Great Britain by a British firm, Columbia Indestructible even, and believed that:

- 1) Edison cylinders have fallen off from a recording standpoint and the Company does not seem to want to put them right.
- 2) The tax on imported Blue Amberols is very great for an inferior article.

- 3) When the Edison Disc appears on the market it will be beyond "the man in the street" even if the reproduction is better than the 4-minute Blue Amberol, "which is doubtful".

In Manchester the Edison Society was promised 100 Blue Amberols by the Inventor in November 1919, probably in conciliation; these arrived early in the next year. All except Royal Purple 29001 (Bonci) were dubbed and described as wretched recordings and ?called off? the machine after a few moments of playing, the result being that a protest was called against the Edison Company by Manchester, with City of London, Birmingham Edison, Belfast and Tyneside Societies offering support. P. Howard, a founder member of the Manchester Edison Society, speaking at the London Society in August 1920 attributed the presence of four directly-recorded Blue Amberols in the advanced list of September cylinders in a small degree to the petitions sent to Edison, but that theory fails with the nine years of dubbed Blues that followed.

Gradually most of the Edison-ites were reconciled to an acceptance of the dubbed Blue Amberols, relieved by the occasional directly-recorded cylinder from the wax series and with the coming of dance music and popular songs the Edison following remained small but loyal. The rebellion had failed.

Part 3 - Smooth and Rough Diamonds

Preparation in the Edison Laboratory and Works to manufacture a disc record alongside the cylinders started in 1909, and small quantities gradually became available from October 1912, but only in *Edison Phonograph Monthly* of a year later was arrange of 15 or so Disc Phonographs and almost 100 double-sided Edison Disc records first listed, all offered only in the United States, and all by un-named performers. The delays in marketing were undoubtedly caused by technical difficulties, the company was launching a new product against the well-rooted growth of Victor, Columbia and others, and wanted to keep it close to home until problems had been overcome. machines and records were on the market in a limited way but the Company?s excuse for holding back was given as the factory being too busy.

No Edison Disc Phonographs or Discs are known to have been sent officially to the United Kingdom before war broke out with Germany in August 1914, although it seems unbelievable that a sample machine and a few records were not made available to the London Edison office, but nothing has been seen to support this. A few Discs were imported by members of the British phonograph community, though shipping charges and customs duty must have added considerably to what were already high prices. Edison Discs were in general in the Celebrity price range.

At the North London Phonograph and Gramophone Society?s meeting in December 1913 Adrian Sykes, the Secretary, promised Edison Discs at the following meeting and the President Henry Seymour said he would adapt a machine to play them. This took place on January 17th 1914 when the meeting discussed and played 12 sides. For these a Seymour disc talking machines was used with two types of reproducer, the cylinder Diamond Model B, and a diamond sound-box of his own design.

The programme was as follows:

50103

Hear me Gentle Maritana

Baritone

50095	<i>In Cairo</i>	Brass Orchestra
50103	<i>Pretty Girl Milking her Cow</i>	Soprano and Chorus
50095	<i>The Horse Trot</i>	Brass Orchestra
50096	<i>Chiming Bells of Long Ago</i>	Soprano and Chorus
50106	<i>Crimson Blushes</i>	Brass and String Orchestra
50067	<i>Danny Deever</i>	Baritone and Chorus
50106	<i>Mazurka (Badarzewska)</i>	Reed Orchestra
50015	<i>Aisha, Indian Intermezzo</i>	Brass Orchestra
50096	<i>I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls</i>	Soprano
50067	<i>On the Road to Mandalay</i>	Baritone and Chorus
(presumed numbers added by author)		

According to Seymour these would not be generally available to the British public before next season at the earliest. The Society was getting the Edison Discs direct from American supplies.

The first reported account of the Edison Disc Phonograph was given by member Umpleby of The South London Phonograph and Gramophone Society on April 18th 1914, but there are no further details unfortunately, and it is not clear if he had seen it on a trip or was reading an account from an American friend. The Society had to wait until June 1915 before the Secretary (and local dealer) C. A. Bond unwrapped a 'Surprise packet' and showed his 20 guinea Edison Disc Phonograph (either an A- or B-80). This instrument was said in reports by the talking machine press to be the first of its kind publicly demonstrated in this country, and Bond played it "to the entire satisfaction of the assembly". Among items heard were:

?	<i>Poor Wandering One - Pirates of Penzance</i>	
80580	<i>Broken Melody</i>	Cello? Lauri Kennedy
80100	<i>The Rosary</i>	Soprano? Christine Miller

The Disc and Cylinder versions of *The Rosary* were compared and 16 out of 17 votes favoured the Cylinder. Apart, the Edison Discs were considered unapproachable. To show their alleged indestructibility one was thrown to the floor and knocked against the table, it was said without damage. A Columbia vocal record was then played on the Edison machine using a Columbia sound-box, and those present remarked on a phono-cut tone. C. A. Bond said he would be giving similar demonstrations to the North and West London societies and hoped to arrange a temporary exchange of Edison Discs with North London members. It is noted that several senior experts present, led by Seymour asked for a large open horn to the Edison Disc Phonograph "to put it in line with the best horn machines".

The practice of bringing in Edison goods privately ceased by March 1916 when importation of talking machine material was forbidden and not lifted for four years. However a Disc Phonograph was played at a meeting of Belfast Phonograph and Gramophone Society on July 2nd 1919, only four months after its formation. This was called an Edison Cabinet Diamond Disc Phonograph and claimed as being shown for the first time in Ireland. The model cannot be identified more closely, but appropriately it belonged to a Mrs Toner. Neither are the record titles identified but the instrument was also adapted to playing needle-cut records using a Zonophone sound-box. These were Victor discs, and their presence with the Edison Disc Phonograph presupposes that Mrs Toner might have brought machine and records over when moving to Ireland from America.

At a Tyneside Society meeting of March 8th 1920 at Newcastle, Mr Lawson, the friend of a member was introduced as having just arrived from Canada, bringing with him a Table Grand Edison Disc Phonograph and records. This was another A- or B-80 and Lawson said that in correspondence over a broken spring with the Edison Comapny at West Orange he was told that as far as the Company was aware none of the Disc Phonographs were in Britain apart from C. A. Bond's private importation referred to earlier. The demonstration of the instrument was described as an "eye (or ear) opener"; it had cost Lawson £15 Customs import duty. After the programme he was trying to find a buyer, as he was going back to Canada. The outcome is not known, and most of those present were impressed with it inspite of an anti-Edison faction in the society who patronised the 78s then coming on the market cheaper and more freely.

If the outbreak of war had deterred the Edison Company from sending Disc Phonographs and Discs to the United Kingdom, Australia was able to report (*Sound Wave* March 30th 1915) that machines and records were now on sale in Sydney, the Pacific Ocean being a safer place for ships than the Atlantic. It was said that the mechanism and cabinet work were of the highest class, but that it was "the Amberola over again, the same reproducer with the cylinder record on the flat". This letter provoked another from Western Australia (*Sound Wave* June 23rd 1915) where the first lot of records and "better class instruments" had arrived and the correspondent thought they were "by far the best record on the market". He looked forward to operatic and orchestral selections entire and to the original scores, but unhappily he would look in vain to Edison for whole works.

Nearer to home The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society marked its first birthday meeting on May 27th 1920 with a demonstration of "the new Edison Disc machine recently imported from America by Mr F. Watts of Clapham". Again this was an unspecified Cabinet Grand. In his report in *The Sound Wave* Pertinax declared disappointment at the heavy surface noise; better things were expected from Edison.

Not until the year 1921 did regular supplies start to cross the Atlantic and models and types at last became identifiable. With A. F. Wagner, Edison's London Manager in attendance The South West Phonograph Assembly (of London) mounted a demonstration on May 21st and included were a William and Mary and Sheraton models loaned by Jake Graham. This popular Liverpool dealer was advertising a range of Edison Disc Phonographs from the Chalet at £40 to the XVIII Century Adam at £200; Discs started at 7s. 6d. but at these prices trade was far from brisk.

By the end of 1922 the cheaper range of London Disc Models had started to come over and all Edison prices were reduced in 1924, a few long-playing consoles and Edisonics arrived in 1926 and in 1928, Jake Graham, loyal almost to the last sold out at a 50% reduction, leaving F. Watts's London and Provincial Phonograph Company of Union Road, Clapham as the only source of Edison Phonograph products remaining in the United Kingdom. It would become a Mecca for British Edison-ites into the 1930s.

CLEANING UP THE SOUND OF OLD RECORDS USING DCart

by Douglas Lorimer

How do you play your old 78's? Do you use a good acoustic gramophone with a finely-tuned sound-box, and only the best fibre needles? Or do you prefer electrical reproduction, using a light-weight pick-up using miniature thorn needles (if you can get them)? Or do you use the latest hi-fi equipment, with specialised filters and graphic equalisers? Or do you take the easy way out and buy old recordings on modern CD transfers, and hear them as no-one could possibly have done at the time they were made? Maybe, like me, you use some or all of these methods, but if you have listened with interest to the growing number of historical CD transfers, and you have paid attention to the small print on their booklets, you will have seen that the great improvement in restoring old recordings is usually due to some kind of computerised processing. The best-known of these is CEDAR, and there is also the Philips "No-Noise" system. Results with these methods can be spectacularly good, or sadly sometimes spectacularly bad. Another method of restoring old recordings comes from Diamond Cut Productions, whose methods can be heard on some of the transfers of Edison lateral-cut records, which are available from CLPGS. These are excellent transfers, and if you are wondering how they are done, now is your chance to find out, because Diamond Cut Productions have made their method available to us as a computer software program.

So, drag your child away from the computer, switch off the latest game of "Doom" or "Duke Nukem", forget about Microsoft Golf, and settle down to some really interesting computer time.

To run DCart (which is an acronym for Diamond Cut Productions Audio Restoration Tools), you need the following (and I apologise if this becomes a little too technical - computer people do tend to speak their own brand of English):

1. A 486 DX (+ math co-processor) or better.
2. A 16-bit Stereophonic Sound Card with line level inputs, or a "Digital Only" card.

3. 8 MBytes of RAM
4. Windows 3.1 or higher.
5. An Audio Source.
6. An Audio Reproduction System.
7. A Hard Drive with enough space to accommodate your Wavefiles.
8. Mouse, Keyboard, and Colour Monitor.

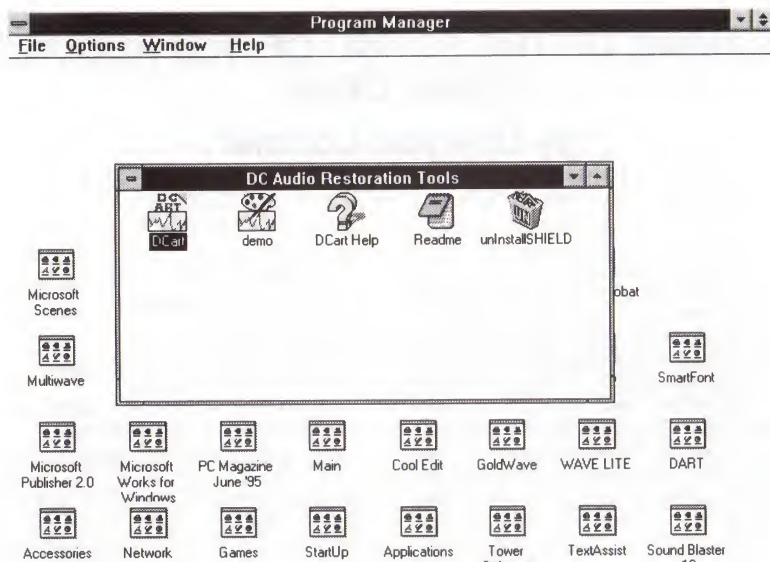
If you have a modern (less than two years old) multimedia computer, then that should take care of items 1,2,3,4 and 8. The specification given here is an absolute minimum, and any older PC would need some upgrading. My own machine just meets this minimum specification, and I have run into both space and memory problems, but these are not insurmountable. A machine with a large (1 GByte or more) hard disk, 16 MBytes of RAM, and Windows 95 installed, would run DCart much more easily.

If you have a smaller hard disk, then it would be advisable to get rid of any programs you don't really need (there goes Microsoft Golf!), so that you have around 250 Mb of space left. With a little effort, this should leave enough space to run DCart. The actual DCart program occupies only 2 Mb of disk space.

With regard to items 5 and 6 in the above list, this could be the most difficult thing to achieve.

It is a lucky person whose PC is right beside the hi-fi, and a possible solution would be to record items (preferably in stereo) on a portable cassette machine, and plug that into the computer's sound card. Another thing to remember is that a computer sound card usually uses 3.5mm jack sockets (as found on most Walkman type of equipment) so special connecting leads may have to be bought.

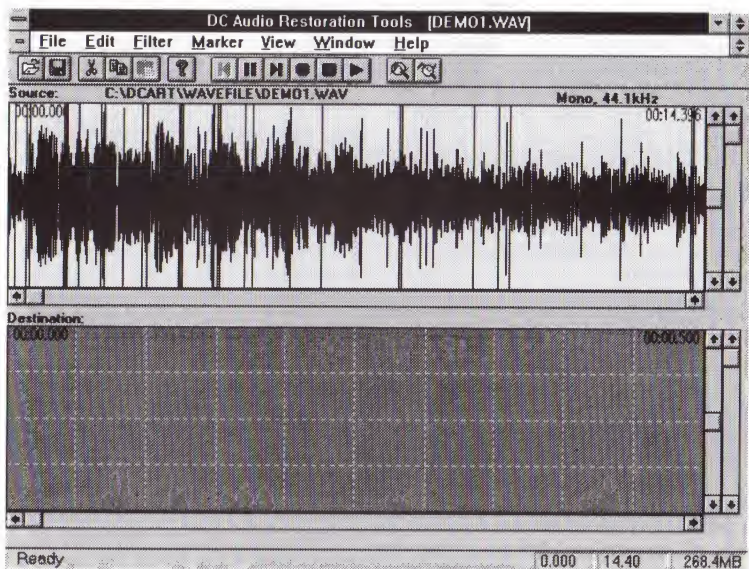
The first thing to do is to install DCart on to your computer. This is very easy, as the installation is done using an Instal Shield Wizard, which gently takes you through the various stages, and creates a program group and an icon for DCart on your desktop. The program seems to



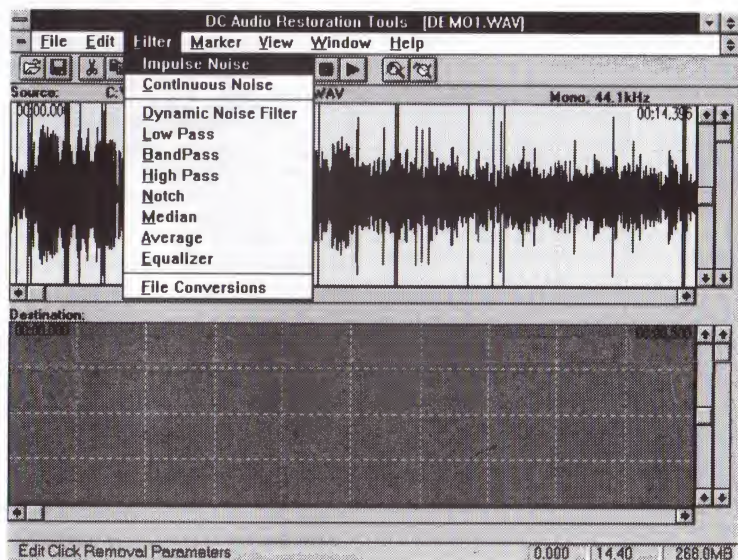
DCart program group and icons on the Windows 3.1 desktop (Note the Uninstall feature).



DCart's welcome screen



The file has been recorded using DCart, and is ready for processing.



Choosing the Impulse Filter from the Filter Menu

be designed primarily for Windows 95, as when installed under Windows 3.1, I found error messages appeared when I tried to access the help menu from the desktop icon. (The full help menu is available from within the program in either version of Windows, so this is not a problem.) The help menus really do offer a lot of information, and as there is no manual (an excellent way of cutting costs) the best thing is to print them out. This involves quite a lot of reading, and do read them before starting - they are compulsory reading.

Here is a brief description of what can be done with DCart:

When you open a new file, a record dialog box appears. On this you can select mono, stereo, and the Sample Rate (44.1 KHz, 22.05 KHz or 11.025 KHz). The higher the sampling rate, the better quality recording you will get. Unfortunately the higher the sampling rate, the more space will be taken up on your hard disk, and the more processing time will be involved in each stage of restoration. So you have to decide what is best for your requirements. Then all you have to do is play your 78 and record it (preferably in stereo) on to your hard disk. You can check immediately by clicking on the "Play" button on screen to see if it has recorded properly. Some adjustment of volume may be necessary, so that input and output appear to be at the same level.

Now the fun really begins. The help files give a very thorough list of what to do when restoring 78's. This includes instructions on cleaning your records, setting up pre-amplifiers, verifying speed, choosing correct styli - they even talk about half-speed mastering! At this stage you convert the original wavefile you have created to a mono signal. You can choose L or R (if one groove wall is more worn than the other), L+R (the conventional way, equivalent to the mono switch on your amplifier), or L-R (if it is a hill-and-dale recording).

Next you can filter out Rumble, using a High Pass Filter.

The next stage is the Impulse Filter, to reduce clicks and plops. There are many variables in this process, and it is very easy to overdo things, so make good use of the Preview facility, available at all stages of the process, to check on what you are doing.

Now you can De-Crackle the recording, removing the gentle crackling sound which is such a

nuisance on many 78's of the 1920's and 1930's.

Next comes de-hiss, which can remove the hiss found on earlier records.

This involves the use of a Continuous Noise Filter. You sample the surface noise at the beginning of your recording, analyse that, and the program will attempt to remove the noise you have sampled from your recording. This involves a lot of computer work, and one three-minute side can take 15 minutes to process.

There is an opportunity to use a notch filter to remove any hum on a recording.

If you wish, you can give the result a more professional sound, by fading-in and fading-out your recording, thus avoiding an abrupt start and stop.

Lastly there is a very efficient ten-band graphic equaliser, which you can adjust to your own preferences. As an equaliser of this quality would cost many times the price of DCart, this feature alone would make this program worth the money.

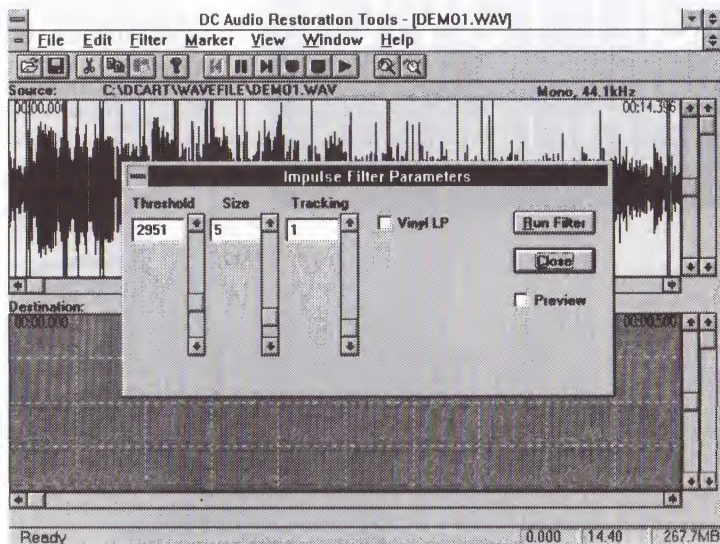
There are many other features in this excellent little program - all I can say is, try it for yourself.

So, having said all that, how well does it work? DCart is not the only sound editor available to the PC user, and so we have to compare it with rival programs.

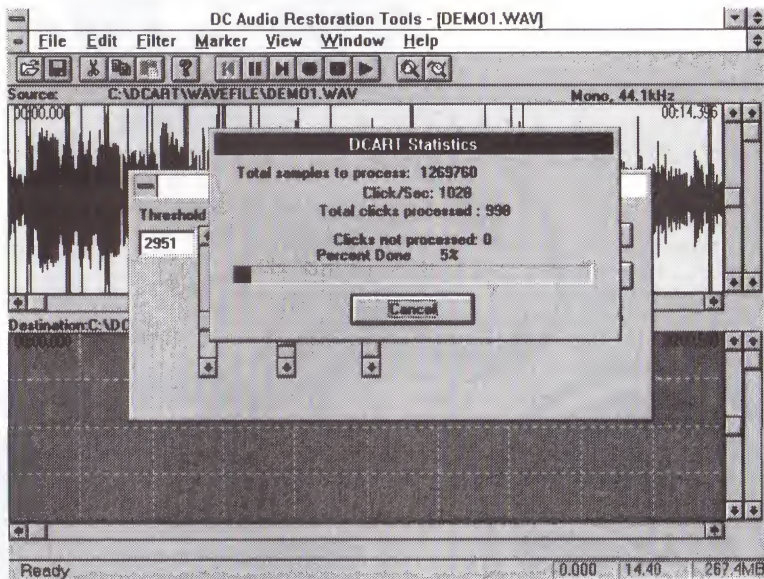
Most Sound Cards come with software which includes a wavefile editor. Creative Labs provide an excellent one with their Soundblaster cards. But all you can do is edit files - no form of noise reduction is available. You can also get (often free with CD-ROM magazines) facilities for playing Wavefiles, with no editing facilities at all.

PC magazines (and the Internet) are also a good source of demonstrations of various programs, made by the software manufacturers to entice you to buy the full programs. I have discovered quite a few wavefile editors in this way (and I am sure that there are many more).

Turtle Beach have a WaveLite program, which is only a simple wavefile editor. They also have Wave SE, which has more facilities, including Cross-fade, which can be used to join together two wavefiles. (We would want this for joining together 78 rpm sides, as in classical recordings.)



Setting up the Impulse Filter



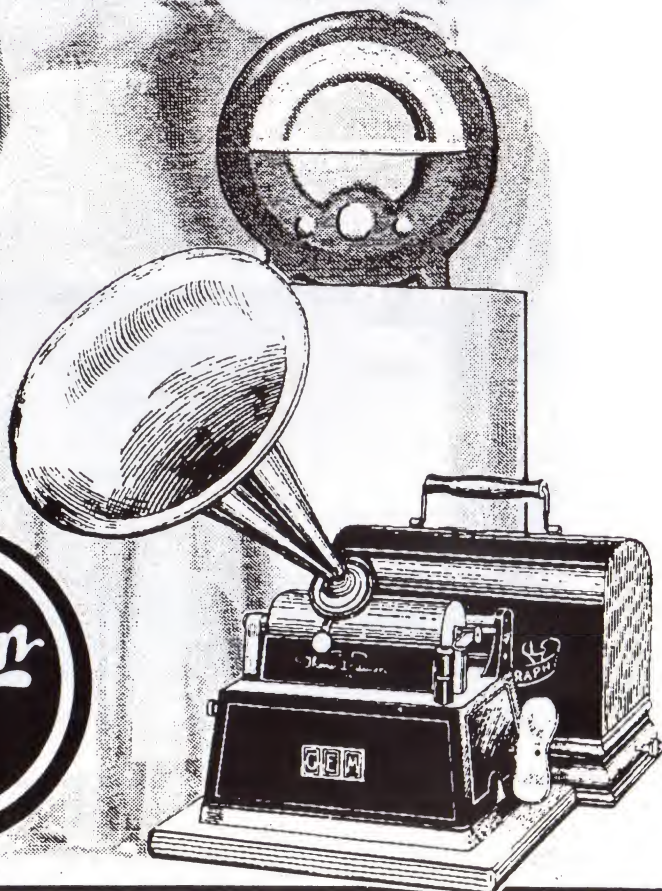
Filtering is now taking place. We are given a running total of how much processing is done.

Brian Taylor Antiques



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An EMG Mk. 10 'Oversize' Gramophone, English,
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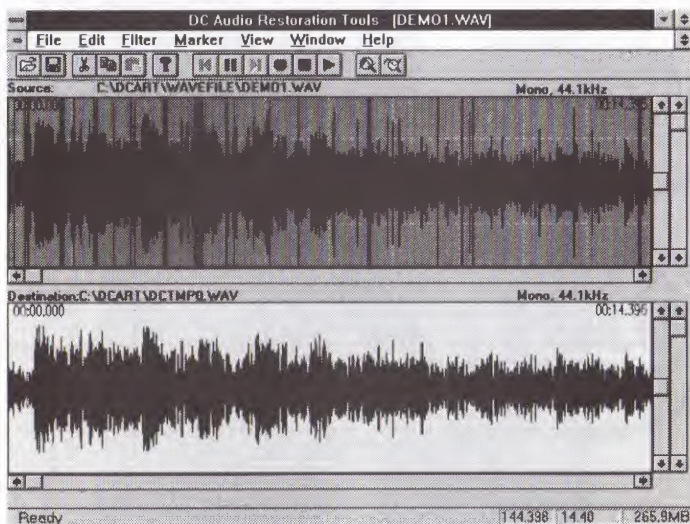
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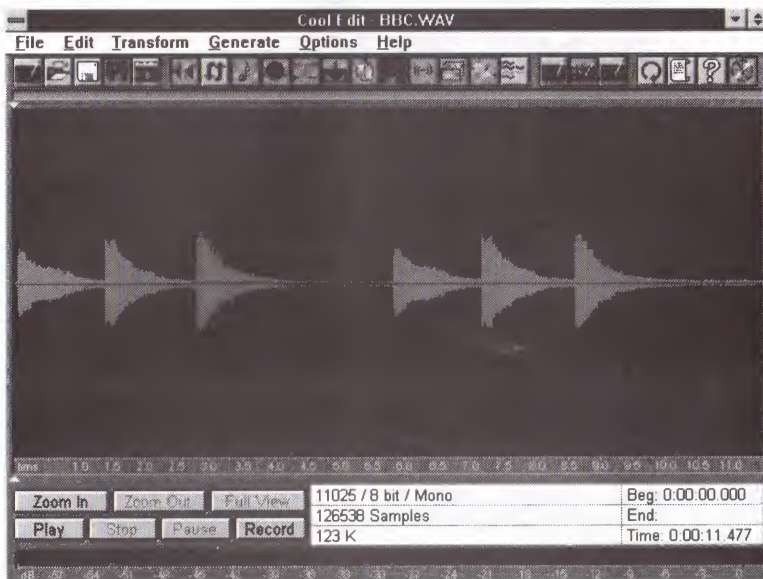
For further information, contact: Jon Baddeley [REDACTED]

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SOTHEBY'S
FOUNDED 1744



The final stage - the two windows show the signal before and after processing



A wavfile being processed by the CoolEdit system

Goldwave is an excellent little program, which can manipulate wavefiles in a number of ways. The filtering menus are exceptionally good (you even get an on-screen mathematical equation showing exactly what filters you are using, and there is a choice of viewing different wave displays while your wavefile is playing.) There are no impulse noise filters or crackle removers, however.

CoolEdit, which comes in both Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 versions, does have a very efficient continuous noise filter, similar to the one in DCart, as well as a range of other interesting facilities, not necessarily of interest to someone wishing to process 78's.

This brings us to DART (Digital Audio Restoration Technology) - a much more sophisticated program, costing several times the price of DCart. DART is incredibly easy to use after DCart. There is one button on the toolbar called EasyRun, and even accepting the default settings of this you can process out most of the noise on even a very noisy 78, while leaving the musical signal relatively unscathed. Obviously much of the huge price difference between DART and DCart is accounted for by the fact that the DART program calculates all the complex filter level adjustments itself, where DCart leaves you to find out by trial and error which is the best solution. DART has that kind of flexibility if you wish it, but the defaults are good enough for all but the most unusual circumstances.

So where does that leave us? DCart is a wonderful little program, and with the excellent help menus, you can achieve spectacularly good results. I tried all sorts of different records, from Berliners to LP's and both vertical- and lateral-cut records, with reasonable success every time. Time is the one thing needed when running DCart - the full processing of one 78 rpm side took a whole afternoon, and on my PC running Windows 3.11, I was left with no workable memory by the end of the session. This is one problem of running this program on a PC with the minimum specification. I found it necessary to delete all but the final file containing the finished article, and save that, reboot the computer, and then copy that file on to tape. Then before starting on another record, I had to delete that final file as well to create enough space on my hard disk.

The preview facility has problems running on a PC with low specification - there is not enough memory to process and audition a file at the

same time, so the sound comes in little bursts - like skimming across a CD in fast forward motion, only worse.

However, with a great deal of patience DCart can be run on an older PC, and believe me, the results make it well worth while. On a fast Pentium PC with a large hard disk (or even better, a second hard disk for storing music files) and lots of memory (at least 16 Mb) DCart should fairly fly along, but do be prepared to spend a long time on each record.

It is perhaps unfortunate that DCart has no easy facility for joining together 78 rpm sides, although Copy and Paste facilities can do this (cross-fading is only really necessary when the original performance was continuous, and then split up into 78 rpm sides). Even DART does not have this facility however, so if you need to do this, the best bet is to transfer your processed files into an editor which does crossfading. As we are dealing with purely digital files at this stage, no loss of quality should occur.

On this subject, I have noticed with some surprise that not all sound editors sound the same. This raises the whole ugly business of the perfection of digital sound, and we should not follow this line of argument at this time.

In terms of ease of use, DART is a clear winner over rival systems, but costs several times more than its competitors, so is really only to be considered for semi-professional work. CoolEdit and DCart cost about the same, but CoolEdit is not aimed specifically at the restoration of old records, although it can do some things very well.

Which brings us back to DCart. This is well worth investigating - it may well drive you mad when you are learning it, but the program is quite intuitive, and certainly can give fine results. It can also give quite horrible results if not used properly - I managed to make an HMV orchestral recording from the 1930's sound like a Polydor Light-ray recording from the 1920's complete with whistling violins (you remember that sound, don't you?) by over-use of continuous noise filtering.

Now, where did I leave that box of soft-tone needles?.....

DCart - Diamond Cut Audio Restoration Tools

is available in the United States from Diamond Cut Productions, PO Box 305, Hibernia, NJ 07842-0305, U.S.A. at **\$59.95 plus postage**. For the U.K. and Europe it is available from the Society's Booklist at **£45 plus postage**.

C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

Additions

CL 29 Reprint of the instruction leaflet for the *Audio-Phonic Home Recorder* - a device from the late 1940s early 1950s. **£1 including postage**.

Unreleased Edison Laterals 1 (reviewed in issue 189, December 1992), *The California Ramblers - Edison Laterals 2* (reviewed in issue 200, October 1994) and *Edison Laterals 3: Hot Dance of the Roaring 20s* (reviewed in issue 207, December 1995) are now in stock. The price for each disc is still **£13 plus postage**.

Swinging Down The Lane with the Isham Jones Orchestra and *State of Tennessee Blues* with the Memphis Jug Band are now in stock. These two discs were reviewed in issue 211, August 1996 by Paul Collenette. The price for each disc is **£13 plus postage**.

The new updated edition of Eric L. Reiss' book *The Compleat Talking Machine* is now in stock. The price is **£25 plus postage**.

DCart - Diamond Cut Audio Restoration Tools as described by Douglas Lorimer in his article on pages 135-139 and 142-143 in this issue is now available from the Booklist at **£45 plus postage**.

Cordex Binders (larger size to accomodate 12 issues of the 40-page issues of *Hillandale News*, plus index) **£6 plus postage**.

C.L.P.G.S. Booklist,
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REVIEWS



Beethoven: Sonatas for Violin & Piano in F major Op. 24 ('Spring') and C minor Op. 30 No. 2; Brahms: Sonata for Violin & Piano in G major Op. 78 ('Regensonate'); Adolf Busch (violin), Rudolf Serkin (piano). *Magic Talent* CD 48022, 70:43, AAD mono, bargain price.

The three recordings heard on this disc were made in London between 1931 and 1933: Beethoven's sonatas Op. 24 and Op. 30 No. 2 on 17 May 1933 and 23 November 1932 respectively, and the Brahms on 4 May 1931. The relationship between Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin was both long and fruitful. The former was born in Siegen in 1891 and, after studying in Cologne, formed the Busch Quartet. Rudolf Serkin was born in a village in Bohemia in 1903 and, after studies in Vienna with Riccardo Robert, who also taught George Szell, later moved to Berlin. There, he met Adolf Busch, with whom he formed a duo in 1922. After emigrating to the United States of America in 1939, they founded the Marlboro Festival in 1951. Apart from the artistic bond that existed between them, they were also related by marriage: Serkin was Busch's son-in-law.

The first movement of the 'Spring' sonata, and, for that matter, the work as a whole, is a lesson in the juxtaposition of tempi. The speed at the beginning of the Allegro is $\text{♩}=138$. This tempo is retained throughout the first and second subjects. However, by the end of the development, Busch and Serkin increase their speed to $\text{♩}=152$; this tempo is related to that of the slow movement. The quicker tempo adopted in the development not only clarifies the movement's architectonics but, also, underlines the dramatic character of the central section; they return to the 'tempo primo' at the recapitulation. The balance between the violin and the piano is finely executed throughout this performance. The intricacies of Beethoven's winding melody in the exposition are skilfully caught by both violinist and pianist and the line is supported by a well-defined reading of the accompaniment.

More important, Busch and Serkin look to the phrase when formulating their musical argument, and the manner by which they conclude each of the four-bar units in the first sixteen bars is of interest. In bars 4 and 6, Busch realizes the two-note phrases by inserting a small crescendo-diminuendo on the minim, followed by a shortened crotchet. Serkin, however, plays each of the minims in bars 14 and 16 as if coloured by a tenuto, followed by a diminuendo over the remainder of the bar. Whilst both artists use different methods, the integrity of the overall phraseology remains intact.

Unity of approach is central to Busch's and Serkin's reading of the slow movement. This is apparent in bars 8 and 16, where Beethoven requires the violinist to play semi-staccato. In bar 8, Busch plays the supporting, semi-staccato crotchets under a single up-bow, directing both the accompaniment and the dynamic to bar 9; he applies a similar effect in bar 16. Serkin, who has the melodic rôle in bar 8, colours the music by applying a crescendo throughout the bar. In bar 9, he allows the dynamic to decay naturally over the period of the first two beats ($\text{♩}=76$), shaping the remainder of the bar with a discreet crescendo-diminuendo. In the Scherzo, the violinist and pianist use tempo as a means by which to underline the architectonics of the movement. The tempo of the Scherzo, $\text{♩}=80$, captures the playful demeanour of the music. At the onset of the Trio, the speed is increased to $\text{♩}=88$, accentuating both the tri-partite structure of the movement and this section's melodic character. When the Scherzo is played for the second time, the performers return to the 'tempo primo'. Whilst their tempo manipulations are of the highest order, Busch's articulation and intonation in the Scherzo are not to his usual high standards; his sound lacks definition. However, when both violinist and pianist come to play the staccato quaver material in the Trio, their sense of ensemble and articulation is, again, first rate.

The tempo of the Rondo is $\text{♩}=80$; this pulse is directly related to that of the Scherzo. From these speeds, along with those heard in the first and second movements, one can determine Busch's and Serkin's vision of the sonata as a whole. The tempi of the first and second movements are linked: the speed, first heard in the Allegro's development section, $\text{♩}=152$, is related to the pulse of the Adagio molto espressivo, $\text{♩}=76$. The third and fourth move-

ments' tempi are also related: $\text{♩}=80$ and $\text{♩}=80$ respectively. Thus, the performers divide the sonata, in terms of tempo, into two main parts. Phrasing and articulation are, again, central to their reading in the Rondo. For example, in bars 1 and 9, both Serkin and Busch emphasize the two two-note phrases that precede the two staccato crotchets that constitute the second half of each of these bars. However, between bars 90 and 96, where the violin has triplets that are marked two slurred one detached, Busch's quality of sound is uneven. When Serkin takes up this figure, he successfully realizes its articulation.

Beethoven gives ♩ as the time-signature for the first movement of the C minor sonata. Busch and Serkin, however, take it in two, rather than four beats to the bar. The movement's overall tempo is $\text{♩}=80$. This not only enhances both the melodic line and the phraseology of the movement but, also, is in keeping with its superscription, *Allegro con brio*. The artists pace the opening twenty-four bars in an exemplary fashion. The change of character at the second subject is well caught, and the balance between the violin's dotted melodic material (bars 29 to 35 inclusive) and the piano's staccato quavers is well defined. Further, the manner by which the violinist and pianist execute the rising scale passages, between bars 46 and 49 inclusive, underlines the duo's mutual understanding of the complementary nature of Beethoven's characteristic articulation.

Unlike their reading of the F major sonata, Busch and Serkin do not link the tempi of the first and second movements in this sonata. Their tempo in the *Adagio cantabile* is $\text{♩}=54$. Whilst this may appear to be a slow speed, neither the violinist nor the pianist allows the music to stagnate; for them, the superscription's key-word seems to be 'cantabile'. Between bars 33 and 52 inclusive, Busch and Serkin adopt a faster tempo. Whilst the increase is minimal, it is a cunning manoeuvre: it allows them to maintain the line throughout the sustained melody. The impression of forward motion that was achieved in the slow movement is, again, apparent in the *Scherzo*. Whilst the performers maintain the overall tempo ($\text{♩}=69$) throughout this section, they constantly sit on its front edge. Moreover, one is aware of their well-considered approach to phrasing and articulation. For example, Serkin prepares the two-note phrase in bar 4 by a skilful manipulation of the staccato crotchets in bar 3: he applies a small crescendo on beats two and three.

The *Finale*'s time-signature (♩) indicates that the movement should be taken in two beats to the bar. However, Busch and Serkin seem to alternate between a minim pulse and that of a semibreve. The overall tempo of the movement is $\text{♩}=126$. Whilst the opening twenty-nine bars are in two, the next ten bars feel as if they are in one beat to the bar. Even within the parameters of bars 1 to 29, one suspects that Busch and Serkin consider the bar to be the basic pulsual unit. At the *Presto*, they increase their speed to $\text{♩}=92$. This, however, is soon modified and is followed by a virtuosic dash to the end of the movement.

Brahms' sonata in G major, composed during the summer months of 1878 and 1879 at Pörschach, is the antithesis of Beethoven's tempestuous C minor sonata. Where the latter is full of dramatic fire, the former exudes tranquillity. This sense of repose is seminal to Busch's and Serkin's reading of the first movement, and is reflected in their tempo: $\text{♩}=52$. It would seem, therefore, that the qualification, 'ma non troppo', within Brahms' superscription, *Vivace ma non troppo*, was central to their interpretation. At the second subject, 'con anima', they increase their speed to $\text{♩}=66$. More important, however, is the manner by which they interpret Brahms' phraseology. Between bars 36 and 43 inclusive, the composer divides the music into two four-bar phrases and, from the middle of bar 39, he marks a crescendo. For many musicians, the observance of the crescendo alone would have sufficed, but Busch and Serkin take the musical argument one stage further. Within each of these units, they not only apply a crescendo-diminuendo but, at the end of each of the four-bar phrases, insert a small *rallentando*. Whilst this is a simple device, their manipulation of it is both exemplary and characteristic.

The tempo at the opening of the *Adagio* is $\text{♩}=54$. As in the *Adagio cantabile* from Beethoven's C minor sonata, Serkin moves the music forward, avoiding the possibility of stagnation. The violin's printed crescendo-diminuendo between bars 9 and 11 are well judged by Busch. Similarly, the printed diminuendo in bars 16 and 17 (beat 1) is complemented by a finely executed *rallentando* at the end of the phrase. By reapplying this effect in bars 23 and 24 (beats 1 and 2), the violinist and pianist prepare the listener for the onset of the 'più andante'. However, the new tempo is not fully established until bar 30. Here, the pulse is directly related to

the opening section, ♩=54. Busch and Serkin return to their opening speed at the Adagio come prima.

As in the first movement, the performers look to the qualification within the last movement's superscription (*Allegro molto moderato*) as the basis for their reading. From the tempo taken, ♩=80, one is aware that 'molto moderato' are the key-words. Again, one is impressed by Busch's articulation. For example, his rendering of the dotted rhythm in the first six bars, with the semiquaver rest, is excellent. Further, the two-note phrase in bar 4, marked semi-staccato, is equally well played, with each of the crotchets being weighted according to their importance within the phrase and the bar's overall rhythmic structure. However, in bars 102 and 103, Busch is unable to meet the passage's technical demands. This said, one must remember that he did not have the advantages of the modern recording industry at his disposal; today, such blemishes are corrected by a second take.

At bargain price, this disc is an attractive buy. For the student of performance practice, this CD is a valuable guide to the chamber music style of the early twentieth century. The readings are well considered and are indicative of both Busch's and Serkin's performance aesthetics. This disc can be highly recommended.

Raymond Holden

Frank Newman at the Organ of The Plaza Cinema, Rugby and Lozell's Picture House, Birmingham. Poppy Records GXP004/N

For more years than I care to remember I've been an addict of the cinema organ. It all started when my parents took me and my sister on a holiday to London. One day the weather was poor and we were treated to the cinema. We travelled to the Odeon, Leicester Square to see the British premiere of *Captain Horatio Hornblower RN*, starring Gregory Peck and Virginia Mayo. Before the film started we had a short recital on the cinema organ. I was enthralled to see a hole appear in the stage and this huge Wurlitzer start rising up through it. I was captivated by the sound of this mighty instrument. Over the years since then I've collected 78s of the cinema organ including a couple of Octacros 78s of Frank Newman.

collected 78s of the cinema organ including a couple of Octacros 78s of Frank Newman.

Like some other of his contemporaries Frank Newman had a classical training. His first professional engagement was as organist of the 15th century Parish Church of St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich. He became resident organist of Lozell's Picture House, Birmingham when it opened in 1926. After a period in Germany he returned to Lozell's in 1931. In 1933 Frank was asked to become resident organist at a new cinema in Rugby. This was the Plaza Cinema. The recordings on this tape come from his periods as resident organist at the above two cinemas.

On listening to the recordings on this cassette I was immediately struck by the polished playing of Frank Newman. His classical background shows. There is a wide selection of music on this tape ranging from the classical through numbers of contemporary shows to popular ballads. The selection opens with *Castles in Spain* followed by a selection of *Musical Comedy Favourites* by Jerome Kern, Noël Coward, Vivian Ellis, Sigmund Romberg and Richard Rogers. Other musical selections include one of Frank's own compositions called *Cinderella's Shoes*. Classical composers like Cécile Chaminade (*Idylle Arabe*), Eric Coates (*Children's Dance and Scène du Bal*) and Armas Järnefelt (*Præludium*) are also represented. The cassette ends with various operatic composers such as Leoncavallo, Puccini, Verdi and Wagner in *Memories of Grand Opera*.

All in all this is a most enjoyable cassette. Listening to it brought back memories of that day long ago at the Odeon in Leicester Square. It is a must for cinema organ fanatics. Poppy Records are to be congratulated for restoring these recordings to the catalogue. The originals are very hard to come by these days. The transfers, all expertly done by Adrian Tuddenham, give no indication of the poor quality of the original recordings which were either on the Broadcast or Octacros labels. Broadcast used the Marconi process electrical recording system and although I do not know what system Octacros used the results on their records were equally as awful as those of the Marconi process. All credit is due to Adrian for overcoming this disadvantage.

Another plus point is awarded to Poppy Records for providing a spoken alternative to the written notes. This is especially useful for those with failing eyesight. Those, like myself, with a penchant for authenticity should appreci-

ate the touch Poppy Records have given to this cassette by having the notes read by Frank Newman's son Anthony.

I thoroughly recommend this cassette **GXP004** (or **GXP004/N** with spoken commentary) to all lovers of the cinema organ. It is excellent value for money and can be obtained from **Poppy Records**, 88 Mount Road, Southdown, Bath, Somerset BA2 1LH, price **£5.99**.

Chris Hamilton

Ernest Ansermet Conducts Handel: Six Concerti Grossi from Twelve Grand Concertos, Opus 6

Koch Historic 3-7708-2H1

Serendipity rules! It is often a pleasant surprise to find how chance remarks and enquiries can lead to unexpected revelations or opportunities for gaining knowledge. A copy of this recent CD arrived, quite out of the blue, from the producer Teri Noel Towe: apparently I had unwittingly given him a significant and useful piece of information, of which more anon.

In 1739 Handel wrote the twelve 'Grand Concertos in 7 Parts' for strings and basso continuo, with two solo violins and cello as *concertino*. In 1740, the set was published by subscription, as his Opus 6. The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (volume 8, p108) reproduces a contemporary listing of the subscribers (headed by six Royal Highnesses); more importantly, the accompanying article on Handel ranks the works with Bach's Brandenburg set as "one of the twin peaks of the Baroque concerto" and dubs them the "apotheosis of improvisation." This is praise indeed! The variety of mood, style and treatment of the apparently restricted musical forces, together with the surprise element engendered even within the formally more 'ordinary' sections, clearly give these works considerable impact.

Nearly two hundred years later, in 1929, six of the Concertos (numbers 2, 3, 4, 6, 10 and 12) were chosen by Decca for recording, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. So as to fit onto twelve discs (T.112/123), the third movement from Concerto no 10 had to be omitted and no 6 was recorded out of sequence. Luckily, that inconvenient information is made apparent on the 78rpm disc labels, but the discs give no

indication of the identity of the orchestra or soloists, acknowledging only the 'Decca String Orchestra.' Amazingly, the labels proudly proclaim the use of a 1790 Broadwood harpsichord (an early - although not the first - recording of a genuine period instrument) but not the harpsichord player.

In 1990 I gave a talk to the CLPGS dealing with harpsichord recordings on 78s, and I included as an early example of recorded continuo harpsichord one of these early Decca discs. I mentioned having discovered the identity of the harpsichord player, quite by accident, in a book of memorial tributes [ed. Eric Blom; Dent, 1944] to the conductor Leslie Heward (1897-1943). In one of the essays, Ansermet praised Heward's playing for the recordings and mentioned also that William Primrose was the leader of the orchestra. (Heward made several other early discs for Decca, as conductor and as accompanist, so his presence is not entirely unexpected.) A tape copy of my talk had been sent to Towe for his opinion on another matter, and he played it on a car journey only 36 hours before his deadline for the CD notes; he had given up hope of discovering the identity of the fine continuo player on the Ansermet recordings, and here was the information he needed, just in time!

Alas, he did not however have time to contact me before the final production, so I was unable to give him additional information included in the Decca supplement dated 15th November 1929. This announces the issue of the first six discs, containing three concertos, and gives the violin soloists as William Primrose and H Greenbaum, with Charles Pini on cello. (Record collectors may recognise Hyam Greenbaum as the conductor on some early pre-electric Vocalion discs, including music by Rameau; he was second violin with the Brosa Quartet, and from September 1929 was briefly with Decca as recording manager, before becoming musical director to C B Cochran in 1930. In 1936 he became musical director with BBC television, and he too died young, in 1942.)

The remaining six discs of three further concertos were issued rather tentatively and piecemeal over the following year, but the whole set remained in the catalogue until 1936, to be replaced in that December by the start of a new set of the entire twelve opus 6 Concertos conducted by Boyd Neel (X.119/143).

Ernest Ansermet is now remembered mainly for founding - and conducting - the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, but his recordings extend back before 1920 to his tenure with the Ballets Russes, during which period he conducted the premières of Falla's *Three Corned Hat*, Satie's *Parade* and other modern works by Prokofiev and Stravinsky. Despite his reputation being thus linked with early twentieth-century works, his interest and taste in baroque music were demonstrated early on - he programmed a Handel Concerto Grosso in the first concert of his new Suisse Romande orchestra, and he once consulted the pioneer early music specialist Arnold Dolmetsch on a point regarding *notes inégales*. As Towe comments in the CD notes, it is thus not surprising to find his interpretations both well-informed and stylish. Perhaps the only real surprises are that he should have made such recordings as early as he did and that a genuine early instrument should have featured so prominently.

Towe remarks upon the tasteful general quality of ornamentation and embellishments and the remarkably modern 'authenticity' of the performance practice in these recordings; he notes (presumably with approval) that none of the 'performing' editions then available was followed, although there are a few inauthentic lapses (occasional string pizzicato in continuo lines, and upwards octave transpositions in the first violins).

The transfers on this present CD reissue have been effected by Seth Winner, and the great difficulty of preserving the presence of the harpsichord sound has been well judged, even at the expense of significant treble filtering. Although I would have hoped for rather greater treble (under more advantageous conditions, perhaps including some help from CEDAR), the sound gives quite a listenable and realistic compromise between the somewhat dim original recording and the relatively high back-ground noise on these discs. There are a number of

patches of slight distortion (mentioned in the notes) which are certainly in the original recordings - several early Decca discs notoriously suffered from even worse problems and not for nothing was the famous Delius *Sea Drift* recording (S.10010/12) withdrawn within a few months of issue.

The booklet of notes with the CD is simple and neatly produced. Towe's enthusiasm for Ansermet and for this early Decca enterprise is well deserved and comes across clearly, although not without a couple of 'standard' slips: Nikisch was Arthur (not Artur) and the harpsichordist who played for the later Boyd Neel complete set, Arnold Goldsbrough, is referred to as 'Goldsborough,' a surprisingly common mistake which persists even in the 1994 edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of Music*! And Mrs Gordon Woodhouse appears with a hyphen, which I have not seen before anywhere. Finally, although there commonly seems to be some uncertainty as to the precise difference between the appellations 'AAD' and 'ADD' on CD issues (the first 'A' anyway means that the original source was Analogue rather than Digital), this CD takes an independent line and is marked with the clearly impossible 'DDD' - perhaps the first 'D' stands for Decca?

Altogether, this is a most worthy and enterprising issue. Having nearly all of the original discs myself, I have often wondered when (or indeed if) these performances would again be offered to the public: on the whole, pre-war renderings of early music tend to belie their age by their stylistic 'naivety' as well as the recorded sound. In this case, you can easily forget the primitive Decca sound and revel in Handel's lively and elegantly thoughtful suites, thanks to the fine musicianship of nearly seventy years ago. And what another piece of luck - the whole set of 78s just fits neatly onto a CD of nearly 78 minutes.

Peter Adamson

Back issues of Hillandale News

Back issues of the magazine are available from me at **£2.00** for each of the issues for **1989/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93 and 1993/94**. (April 1990 and August 1990 issues are not available except in photocopy form.) I can also supply any issue from **No.100** in photocopy form at **£2.00** per issue.

These prices include postage. Please send any orders with cheques/postal orders made out to C.L.P.G.S. to me:

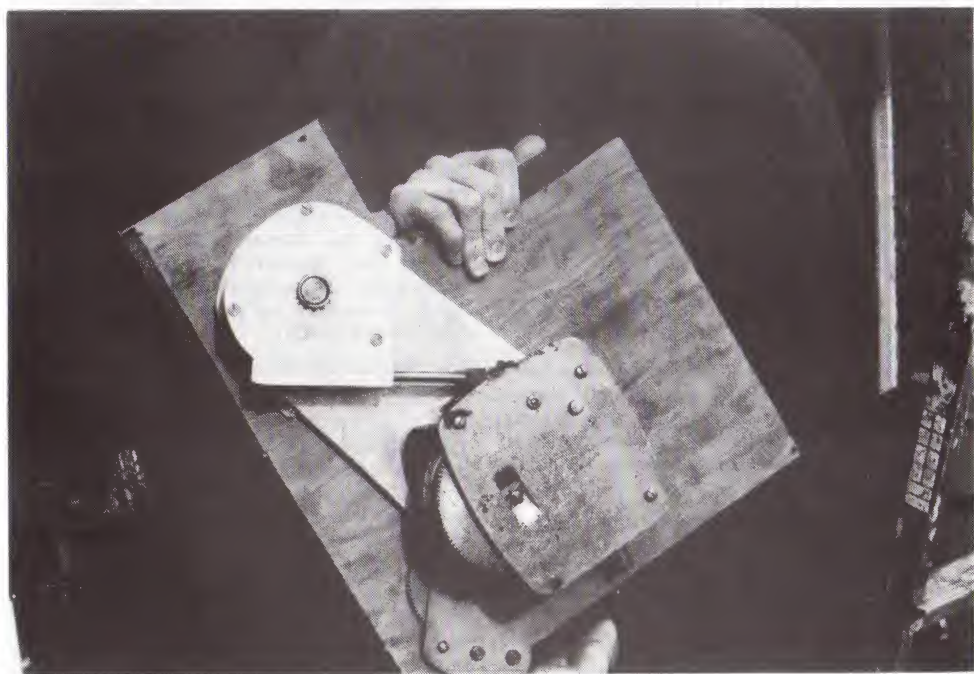
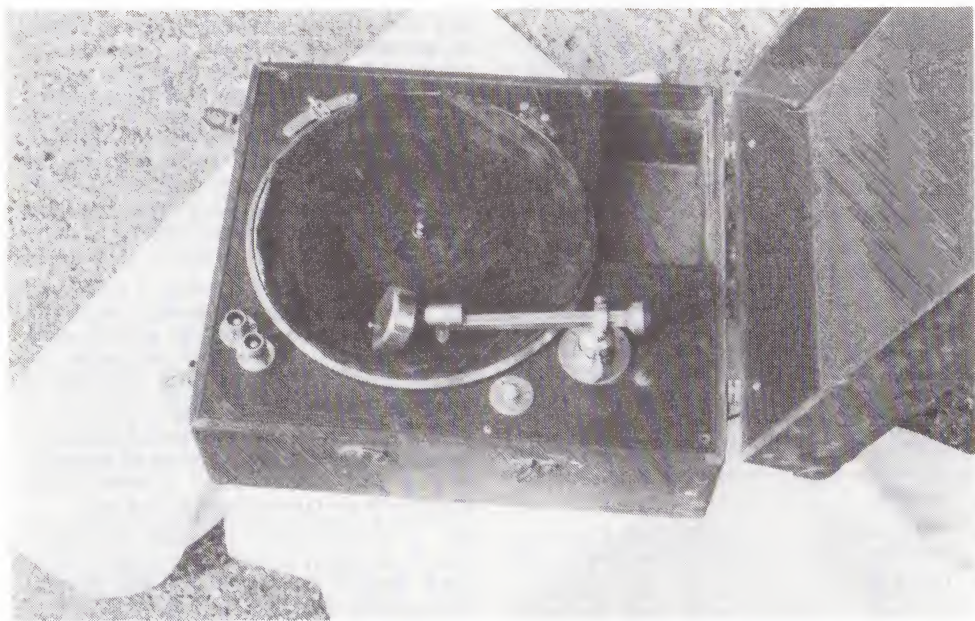
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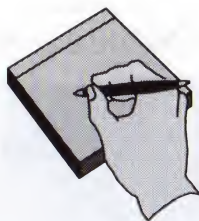
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS IN LONDON

The London Meetings are held in the **Parlour Room** at the **Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church Halls**, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EL at **7pm** on the **third Tuesday of the month**.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| October 15th | George Glastris will be giving a programme of cylinders called <i>Americana on Cylinders</i> . This will be played on machines from the collection of Dominic Combe. |
| November 19th | Peter Copeland of the National Sound Archive will talk on <i>The Engineer and the Artist</i> , Part 1. |
| December 17th | Members Night - Bring your own selections. |
| January 21st 1997 | Tom Little will talk on <i>The Family Business: Bayreuth</i> . |
| February 18th | Peter Copeland will continue with Part 2 of his talk on <i>The Engineer and the Artist</i> . |
| March 18th | Chris Hamilton - <i>A Taste of Scotland</i> . |
| April 15th | Ewan Langford will give a programme about the professional career of his mother the singer Caroline Hatchard (1910-1932) entitled <i>My Mother, Aunts, Uncles and Friends</i> . |



LETTERS



Help Please!

Dear Sir,

I found a gramophone at a car boot sale in a very sorry condition, as can be seen in the enclosed photographs on page 151. It has no internal horn and an electrical pick-up. Can any reader enlighten me on the make of gramophone and on the purpose of the various attachments on the motor-board?

Any information would be gratefully received and I'm willing to re-imburse any reasonable expenses.

Yours faithfully,

E. Rosati, [REDACTED] Bexley, Kent
DA5 2HS

Grunting Spring Syndrome

Dear Chris,

It occurred to me, when reading the letter in the August issue of *Hillandale News* from Roger Moon, that you would either receive a plethora of replies or none at all, on the basis that "somebody else will do it". I am inclined to think that the latter situation will apply as my one and only query to the magazine never received an answer. This was in the December 1994 issue where I requested information about the use of a Linguaphone Repeat Attachment.

What Roger refers to as the "Grunting Spring Syndrome" I have always called the "HMV Bump". It is caused by the graphite-based grease, used by the Gramophone Company, drying out and leaving a very hard residue. Apart from the unpleasant noise aspect it can also cause spring damage if left unchecked. The noise is caused by the side of the spring engaging on lumps of the residue as it unwinds.

One thing is certain. Springs in this condition cannot be cleaned *in situ*. The spring must be removed from the barrel and both spring and barrel thoroughly cleaned and re-greased (not in graphite grease!). I have carried out this operation, on one occasion only, on an HMV

table model similar to the Model 109 but without an automatic start. My joy at removing the spring safely turned to horror when I saw a second spring underneath. I had not realised it was a double-spring motor and the second spring, being deeper in the barrel, was even more difficult to remove. I found Christopher Proudfoot's book *Collecting Gramophones and Phonographs* invaluable in carrying out this exercise and can only refer Roger to this for guidance.

As a practising industrial chemist at that time I had access to solvents to facilitate the actual cleaning process. These are not normally available to the public, so I will not give details, but Christopher Proudfoot suggests the use of paraffin and a brass scouring pad.

I must say that the complete operation - removal of spring barrel, removal of spring(s), cleaning and replacement - involves a fair amount of work, but it is worth it in the end.

May I now take this opportunity to request again, information on the issue of the Linguaphone Repeat Attachment and also possible Model Number and date of my HMV 109.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Voysey, Dursley, Gloucestershire

{Changing springs is a potentially dangerous operation and needs to be undertaken with extreme care! Ed.}

Topic Records

Dear Chris,

I have just acquired a small number of 78rpm records on the bright-red and white Topic label, owned by the Workers' Music Association, London, and wonder if any knowledgeable reader could tell me when they were recorded. No matrix numbers are shown. At a guess, they date from the 1950s.

The titles and artists on the three discs are as follows:

TRC-85:

Talking Unamerican Blues (Silber Sanders)

Betty Sanders acc. Jerry Silverman (banjo)

This is a vicious swipe at the Unamerican Activities Committee, Senator Wood and the U.S. Senate generally.

Banks of Marble (Les Rice)

The Weavers with banjo accompaniment

A lively but bitter song, in which American banks are attacked for filling their vaults with silver while workers suffer.

TRC-98:

Pretty Boy Floyd (Woodie Guthrie)

Guthrie was a folk-singer and songwriter. This is an attempt to show Mr Floyd - and who was he? - had been greatly misjudged.

Talking Miner Blues (uncredited)

A miner reminisces about an explosion which caused many deaths.

Both with Jack Elliott and banjo accompaniment. He sounds like an American singer and he has quite a pleasant voice.

TRC-99:

The Blarney Stones (uncredited)

If You Ever Go Over to Ireland (uncredited)

According to the first song, there is a Blarney Stone in every Irish county! In the second song, an American is taken for a ride (cleaned out!) by an unscrupulous Irish girl. They sound like traditional Irish street songs of the humorous kind.

Both with Margaret Barry and banjo accompaniment.

Margaret Barry made an LP for Emerald, a Decca label, called *Come Back, Paddy Reilly* (GEM-1003). She was described as "Queen of the Gypsies". These two songs were included. It is the first time I have heard an Irish singer accompanied by a banjo. Was he Topic's studio accompanist?

Any help with the Topic label, and any information about these artists would be appreciated. Does anyone have the Emerald LP?

Sincerely,
Peter Cliffe, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

Caveat Emptor

Dear Chris,

In George Woolford's report of the NVCF in Birmingham in the last issue he suggests that EMI are still pressing 78rpm records for use in India and that the "recent" Horn Gramophones on sale here were manufactured to play them!

In fact Hayes is **not** manufacturing 78s for India. The factory in Calcutta is making cassettes.

As far as the machines are concerned, they are mostly just fakes, often put together using parts from portables. Not infrequently new HMV decals are (illegally) applied.

Caveat Emptor!

Brian Taylor, Plymouth

(Readers may be interested to learn that EMI still press 78s. They produce limited numbers of 78rpm records in vinyl of operatic and vocal material for Historic Masters Ltd. Ed.)

Light-ray recordings

Dear Chris,

On reading Paul Collenette's review of the new CD by the Isham Jones Orchestra, I tried to remember something about the General Electric's "Light-ray method" of recording which was used by Brunswick, and perhaps other companies, during the early years of the twenties. As Paul says, this particular method didn't last long, but I would be glad to know more about this, soon-abandoned, technique.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Loughland, Maidenhead, Berkshire

(Can any reader help? I've tried to find out more on this subject myself and have not been very successful. Ed.)

REPORTS



Midland Group Meeting, July 20th 1996

It was very heartening to welcome back a couple of local stalwarts we had not seen for some time, John Dales and Phil Hobson. We hope they enjoyed renewing their ties with our group and that they will come back on a regular basis.

As usual two programmes were presented and the records were played on the Society's E. M. Ginn Expert Minor. Richard Taylor presented the first programme entitled *Classic Jazz Favourites*. This covered the period 1923-1932. The New Orleans influence was heard with items by various King Oliver combinations, Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong. Then Richard spread the musical map wider with examples of New York bands such as Duke Ellington and Fletcher Henderson. We also heard the Kansas City Band of Benny Mutch which, of course, was later taken over by Count Basie.

For the final record we went back to December 1926 with *Dr Jazz* by Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers. This, Richard informed us, was one of his favourite records and would certainly be among his 8 records for his desert island.

After the usual break Geoff Howl presented *Music Hall Greats* in which he reviewed a dozen artists not covered in his previous programme on this subject in 1994.

Geoff again made the point that many of the top artists were loath to record their most popular material, possibly because of the fear of them being pirated by others, or because it might discourage customers from attending their acts live in the theatre.

The artists Geoff spoke about were Morny Cash, Charles Coburn, Whit Cunliffe, Ernie Mayne, Jack Pleasants, Ella Retford, J. W. Rickaby, Maidee Scott, Ernest Shand, Ella Shields, Nellie Wallace and Billy Williams.

The extent of their recording careers was outlined and one recording of each artist was played. Some made just a few records while others were more prolific, such as Ernie Mayne, Jack Pleasants and Billy Williams, who must have almost lived in the recording studio!

Ella Shields, American by birth, recorded her most famous song *Burlington Bertie* 6 times. We heard the first from April 1915. She was later to become a prominent star in musical comedy, as was Ella Retford.

London Meeting, June 18th 1996

Members welcomed Geoff Edwards for *Music of the Jazz Age*, Part 2. Artists as diverse as Fritz Kreisler and Barbra Streisand, Fats Waller to Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick, made for a nice varied programme. Geoff's love of the cinema organ was illustrated with recordings by Phil Kelsal and the *Varsity Drag* played on the Radcliffe's Gavioli Fair Organ. Items by the Marine Band of the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Dutch Swing College band, the Firehouse Five Plus Two and Peter Sellers' rendition of *Any Old Iron* made for much foot tapping and audience participation.

Soundbox

London Meeting, July 16th 1996

Music Hall was the subject for the July meeting. Unfortunately Ernie Bayly was unable to present his programme in person, so Frank Andrews did very well to narrate at very short notice an excellent and entertaining evening.

In the time available some 23 recordings were played on tape, ranging from 1904 cylinders to 1981 TV snips. Artists included were Horace Mashford, Alice Lloyd, Billy Williams, Tom Wootwell, Harry Lauder, Florrie Forde, Gus Elen, Sidney Birchall. A generous portion of Leslie Fry (Leslie Sarony) which included *The Old Sow*, *Piddling Pete*, and *Private Soddit* brought the evening to an end. Our thanks go to Ernie and we wish him a speedy recovery to good health. "Please sir can we have **some more?**"

Soundbox

Geoff ended with Billy Williams singing *Let's Have a Song on the Gramophone* from January 1911.

Many thanks to Richard and Geoff for two thoroughly entertaining programmes.

Geoff Howl

Northern Group Meeting, July 21st 1996

With perfect weather 12 members of the Northern group met at Waterhead, at the northern end of Windermere Lake complete with their portables and their records for this year's *Portable Picnic*.

Requested by members, we held our second Steamboat Portable Picnic on Steam Launch *Shamrock*, owned by Roger Mallinson, the twin brother of Miles.

Observers would be lead to believe that something unusual was to happen when Duncan Miller arrived with his Edison Standard Model A and it was! The previous year the Northern Group's most distant member, Dougie Dove, who lives in Melbourne in Australia, had enjoyed our *Shamrock* day, and had now sent an Australian flag - to be presented to *Shamrock* and raised on board during our picnic. Among the records played were *God Save The Queen* and *Waltzing Matilda* accompanied by all those on board. A glass of Australian wine was raised and a greeting on a cylinder was cut by those present and sent to our counterparts in Melbourne Vintage Sound Society.

Of course there were other machines and records played during the beautiful July picnic, which was thoroughly enjoyed.

Our next meeting will be held on **Sunday December 1st** at 2.00pm in Alston Hall, Longridge, Preston (for directions ring 01229-82 5815). This is our AGM and will be followed by *Music Hall Records* when members are invited to bring their favourite Music Hall recordings and something to play them on. Remember there will be a charge of **£3** per head for refreshments. All are welcome.

Ann Mallinson

West of England Branch, June 8th 1996

The Catchpole house in Totnes, Devon was the scene for this gathering of enthusiasts, and Keith gave us a lovely display of Edison phonographs whilst his wife, Enid, prepared a really delicious spread which was enjoyed by all.

The theme of the event was *An Evening with Thomas Edison*, and we were entertained by no less than six Edison machines which varied in performance from a Gem (Red Gem Model D) to Keith's recently acquired Opera. Keith told us a little of the various machines' history, how he found them, and what had needed to be done in order to restore them to their present condition. We heard a range of two-minute and four-minute cylinders, everyone agreeing that Ada Jones came across splendidly, as did Billy Williams singing *Willie's Wild Woodbines*.

The evening ended with a wide-ranging discussion of various topics, sparked off by the records we had heard, and included such issues as censorship (with particular reference to Marie Lloyd), the Ffestiniog railway, and the current state of the education system in this country. Something for all. Our thanks once again to Keith and Enid. Details of the next meeting - a Christmas Special will be announced in the next issue.

Paul Morris

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For my personal collection, I am willing to pay from £300 to £1,000 per record for one prime example of each of the following: Queen's Dolls House record with original sleeve, Coronation Berliner with original box, German Kaiser Coronation record with original box, early laminated Pathé disc with playing surface intact, 5" Berliner, Stollwerke chocolate or wax record in original box, Pathé Celeste cylinder with original box, Edison Kinetophone cylinder with original box, Bettini Concert cylinder in original box, AICC Concert cylinder in original box, Baird Phonovision record. Other rare and unusual records are also desired, so please contact me if you feel you might have something of interest.

Kurt Nauck, [REDACTED] Spring, TX 77389-3643, U.S.A.

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